

## New Directions for US Ocean and Coastal Resource Management:

A Report on Ongoing Work  
Of The  
US Commission on Ocean Policy

Andrew A. Rosenberg  
Commissioner

## Oceans Act of 2000 – Purpose

To establish a Commission to make recommendations for a coordinated and comprehensive ocean policy that will promote:

- Protection of life & property
- Stewardship of ocean & coastal resources
- Protection of marine environment & prevention of marine pollution
- Enhancement of maritime commerce
- Expansion of human knowledge of the marine environment
- Investment in technologies to promote energy & food security
- Close cooperation among government agencies
- US leadership in ocean and coastal activities

## The Oceans Act of 2000 Commissioners

**Admiral James D. Watkins, USN (Ret.), Chairman**

Dr. Robert D. Ballard  
Mr. Ted A. Beattie  
Mrs. Lillian Borrone  
Dr. James M. Coleman  
Ms. Ann D'Amato  
Mr. Lawrence R. Dickerson  
Vice Adm. Paul G. Gaffney II  
Professor Marc J. Hershman

Mr. Paul L. Kelly  
Mr. Christopher Koch  
Dr. Frank Muller-Karger  
Mr. Edward B. Rasmuson  
Dr. Andrew A. Rosenberg  
Mr. William D. Ruckelshaus  
Dr. Paul A. Sandifer

### • Milestones as of September 2003

- Held 15 public meetings, including 9 regional meetings
- Conducted 17 site visits around the nation
- Heard from 440 presenters - invited and public
- Made transition to deliberative stage in November 2002
- Draft report in review



## Observations, Challenges, Opportunities

- Our nation's capability to manage our coasts is clearly inadequate.
- Depletion of fish stocks continue.
- Ocean pollution is a growing problem.
- Water-borne commerce is essential to the Nation's economic well-being.
- Oceans and climate are inextricably linked but not nearly well enough understood.

## Observations, Challenges, Opportunities

- Jurisdictional and legal confusion and ambiguity are huge problems.
- The lives of all Americans – landlocked as well as coastal – are inextricably affected by the ocean. And all Americans affect the ocean, wherever they live.

## Topics Considered by USCOP

- Aquaculture
- Biodiversity
- Coastal Management
- Coral Resources
- Data Management
- Dredging/Sediments
- Ecosystem-Based Management
- Education
- Enforcement
- Exploration
- Federal Agency Reorganization
- Fisheries
- Governance
- Habitat
- Infrastructure

## USCOP Topics Continued

- Integrated Observing System
- International Leadership
- Invasive Species
- Investment
- Marine Mammals
- Marine Protected Areas
- Monitoring
- Oceans & Human Health
- Offshore Uses & Opportunities
- Policy Framework
- Pollution
- Research
- Technology
- Watersheds

## Governance

### Options for an Ocean Policy Framework

## USCOP Policy Option:

- Immediate creation, by Executive Order or Congressional action, of a National Ocean Policy Framework, composed of:
  - An Executive Office of Ocean Policy, which would be located in the White House and headed by a high-level Assistant to the President
  - A National Ocean Council composed of cabinet secretaries of ocean agencies and directors of independent ocean agencies and chaired by the Assistant to the President for Ocean Policy
  - A Council of Advisors (a FACA advisory body) made up of coastal governors; other appropriate state, local, and tribal government officials; and representatives from the private sector, NGOs, the research community, and watershed organizations

## USCOP Policy Option

The Executive Office and Council - working closely with state, local, and tribal government representatives, as well as the private sector, research community, non-governmental organizations, and watershed organizations – would help build support for passage of a **National Ocean Policy Act**.

## Functions of a National Ocean Council

The following are illustrative of the types of functions of the National Ocean Council:

- Coordinate Federal agency activities regarding the oceans
- Implement and continuously improve Commission's recommendations and develop new policy as needs arise
- Guide federal agency reorganization or consolidation based on Commission recommendations.
- Create a national program to assess the status of ecosystems to provide critical goods and services.

## NOC Functions continues

- Report on the state of the nation's oceans and progress in the implementation of the nation's ocean policy.
- Ensure leadership in international marine affairs. Develop a national ocean research plan
- Develop a national ocean data and information management system.
- Create and oversee the work of task groups formed to address specific ocean and coastal problems
- Coordinate the development of the next generation coastal zone management program.

## NOC Functions

- Guide the creation of Regional Ocean Councils to facilitate ecosystem-based management.
- Pilot program ROCs would be developed by state, territorial, local, tribal and other interested entities (e.g. NGOs and industry groups) with fed agency support.
- Regional Ocean Councils are to coordinate and plan, not supplant existing legal authorities, such as those of Regional Fishery Management Councils or elements of state, tribal and local governments.

## Regional Ocean Governance and Ecosystem-based Management

Facilitate the integration of regional plans for

- coastal management,
- living marine resources,
- pollution control,
- nonliving marine resources,
- conservation, and
- science and research needs, including social sciences.

## USCOP Policy Option: Federal Agency Reorganization

- The Commission believes that consolidation/reorganization at the Federal level is warranted.
- Consolidation should be of functions rather than entities to bring together pieces of a common problem
  - Look for leverage such that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts
  - Achieve efficiency in operations and management
  - Link the systems related to atmosphere, earth and ocean for policy and science
  - Enhance the linkage between science and policy programs
- A lead ocean agency is essential
- Clearly, all programs can't be consolidated so program coordination is still essential with the NOC and ROCs to facilitate

## USCOP Policy Option: Federal Agency Reorganization

- Functions that should be considered for consolidation:
  - Habitat protection and restoration
  - Protected species programs
  - Nonpoint source pollution
  - Fishery management
  - Watershed management
  - Data management systems
  - Mission-oriented research
  - Mapping
  - Education
  - International Leadership and operations
  - Enforcement

## USCOP GUIDING PRINCIPLES RELATED TO SCIENCE

- Decision-making processes should be based on an understanding of natural and social processes and influences.
- To the extent possible, marine resource management should be ecosystems-based.
- A precautionary approach should be used in developing and implementing management plans.



## Ecosystem-Based Management

- The USOCOP's proposed definition of "ecosystem-based management" is: "managing human activities and potential impacts on species or resources within the context of their interactions with other species and the physical environment. The management framework should be multi-species and cross physical boundaries."

## USOCOP Policy Option: Proposed Definition of Precautionary Approach

- The Precautionary Approach is applying judicious and responsible management practices, based on best available science, proactively rather than reactively, to ensure the sustainability of ecosystems for the benefit of future as well as current generations. Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing action to prevent environmental degradation. Scientific assessment, monitoring, the potential for mitigation to reduce environmental risk, and appropriate periodic review of the precautionary restrictions should be part of the management plan.

## Status of Ocean Science Funding

- Thirty of 50 US states have ocean or Great Lake coastlines
- ~50% or more of the US population lives within the coastal zone
- One of every 6 US jobs is marine-related
- Yet, only ~3.5% of the Federal budget for basic research is spent on ocean sciences, down from 7% 20+ years ago.

## USOCOP Policy Options Under Consideration: Research Funding

- The Administration should propose, at a minimum, a doubling of the Federal ocean research budget from today's \$630M to \$1.3B.
- Federal funding for technology should be on a par with the requested increase for ocean research to ensure the Nation has the requisite tools – including the Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observing and Prediction Systems -- to conduct a rigorous program of ocean science.

## USOCOP Policy Option: Ocean & Coastal Observing & Prediction Systems

- Must be a "whole-earth" system; need to understand ocean-atmosphere-land couplings (e.g., watersheds to ocean)
- Must have strong biological components
- Must incorporate satellite observations
- Must be integrated & coordinated across agencies, country and, to degree possible, internationally

## USOCOP Policy Option: Ocean & Coastal Observing & Prediction Systems

- Must have sustained, long-term support
- Must have plan to move to operational status
- Must address needs of multi-sector users: marine operations, research, education, monitoring

## Marine Aquaculture: Problems

- Lack of consistent policy and regulatory frameworks
- Lack of technical information
- Concerns over environmental impacts

## USCOP Policy Options: Marine Aquaculture

- The NOC should incorporate marine aquaculture within an overall plan for mapping, managing, developing and conserving US federal waters.
- The Joint Subcommittee on Aquaculture would be placed under the auspices of the NOC.
- The lead ocean agency should lead on marine aquaculture.
- National standards and operating procedures should be established to minimize adverse environmental effects of marine aquaculture

## USCOP Policy Options: Use & Review of Scientific Information in Fisheries Management

- Require a rigorous peer-review system for stock assessments, assessment methodologies, etc.
- Require RFMCs to form and use Scientific & Statistical Committees (SSCs) appointed from list of qualified experts provided by the RFMC and vetted by the National Research Council.
- Develop clear conflict of interest guidelines for SSC members

## Fishery Management

- The SSCs would set Allowable Biological Catch (ABC); the RFMC must manage with the ABC
- If a plan that stays within ABC is not developed and approved the fishery doesn't proceed

## Fishery Management

- Expand science and stock assessment capability
- Cooperative Research – expand and consolidate programs
- Enforcement – expand state cooperative agreements
- Enforcement – implement mandatory VMS nationwide
- EFH – change and prioritize